

A N

Historical Account

O F T H E

U N I O N,

B E T W I X T T H E

Egyptians and Israelites.

 appears from the most antient Historians, that, in the first Ages, Kingdoms and Dominions were enlarg'd and extended by Succession or Conquest, and the U-

nion betwixt the *Egyptians and Israelites*, is the first Instance we find upon Record of two Nations or Societies of People, voluntarily consolidating themselves into One. The Accounts which we have left us of this Conjunction, are not very full and particular, but what can be collected either from sacred or profane Histories, I will briefly relate;

late, that the Reader, by comparing this with subsequent Constitutions of the same Kind, may form to himself an Idea of the Effects that sometimes attend them.

The House of Jacob, a distinct independant People, being invited by Pharaoh King of Egypt, to change their Habitations, and settle in Egypt, for Reasons well enough known, did accept of the Proposal, and an *incorporate Union* was agreed to by these two Bodies or Societies of People.

(a.) It appears to have been an *incorporate Union*, not of *Lands* and *Dominions*, but of the *People* (in which consists the essential Part of such an Union, that of *Lands* and *Dominions*, being only a contingent Circumstance following, as a Consequence of the other, when either, or both the Nations are vested in the Property of them) for tho' the *Israelites* were settled in a particular (b.) Province by themselves, retain'd their own *Rites* and *Ceremonies*, and *municipal Laws*, with Respect to *civil Affairs* amongst themselves (which appears from the (c.) *Hebrews* disclaiming the Authority of *Moses*, whilst he pass'd for, and was believed to be the Son of *Pharaoh's* Daughter, and



(a.) Gen. 45. 17. — 47. 5. (b.) Gen. 47. 11. Jos. Book 2. Chap. 7. (c.) Ex. 2. 13. Gen. 50. 5.

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and the carrying of *Jacob's* Body to be buried in *Canaan* (d.) and continued to worship the true God, in the Way and Manner they had done before the Union commenced; yet were they consolidated into one Body-politick with the *Egyptians*, being governed by the *Egyptian* Monarch, and subject to such Laws as were enacted by the supreme Authority: In Virtue whereof, all the Hardships and Oppressions they were afterwards exposed to, were pretended to be legally impos'd upon them.

During the Reign of that *Pharaoh*, under whose Administration, and by whose Influence and Authority this Union was accomplished (which by the By hapned in the Year (c.) 1707, before the Nativity of Christ) the *Israelites* lived very happily. That Prince thought himself bound in Honour and Interest to cherish and support these his new Subjects, in their Trade and particular Priviledges; seeing, in Confidence of Justice and Generosity of his other Subjects, they had submitted themselves to the Power and Influence of a People much more potent and numerous than they were in themselves: And he had under him Ministers who enquired into the State, Circumstances and Ability

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Ability of the several Parts of the united People, and accordingly exacted or abated the publick Taxes; and during this Period the (*f.*) House of *Jacob* prospered.

But in Process of Time, when this *Pharaoh* died, and the *Egyptian* Scepter was swayed by a Prince of another (*g.*) Race, who knew not *Joseph*, nor the Services performed by him to his Predecessors, the Tables were turned and the *Israelites* sore oppressed.

He did not govern his Subjects equally, nor bestow his Favours impartially amongst them; he was led and seduced by evil Counsellours, who having nothing so much in View as amassing Riches to him and themselves, (*b.*) made the *Israelites* serve with Rigour, whilst at the same Time the *Egyptians* were more easy, with Respect both to Trade and Taxes: (*i.*) They endeavoured to divide and create Mis-understandings betwixt the two united Bodies of the People, by representing the House of *Jacob*, as a Parcel of beggarly Strangers, who were lately introduced, and put in the Way of feeding luxuriously on the fertile Plains of *Egypt*: They (*k.*) repined, when they beheld their Herds of Cattle

(*f.*) *Gen.* 47. 12. *Ex.* 17. (*g.*) Pool on *Ex.* 1 Ch. 8. V. *Dupin's Ch. Hist.* (*b.*) *Ex.* 1. 13. (*i.*) *Ex.* 1. 9. (*k.*) *Jos.* 2. B. Ch. 10.

Cattle numerous and fair to look on (for *Goshen* was a Hilly Country, and fittest for Pasture, and afforded Cattle to the other Provinces that were more proper for Tillage) nay, they were enraged when they (1.) saw the *Hebrew* Women so very prolifick, and the Number of that People multiplied, tho that was an Additional Encrease of the most valuable substantial Riches, that could accress to the Nation in general ; and as they were conscious of the illegal Severities they imposed upon them, they were afraid and jealous of their Power, least on a proper Occasion they should throw off the Yoke, and therefore resolved to keep them at under ; and in order thereto, maintained that they had acquired a Right of Dominion over them, and might dispose of them, and deal with them as they pleased; disregarding and rediculing all Conditions and Articles of Agreement, and the kind generous Promises and Favours conferr'd by the late good *Pharaoh*, and jumping over all true Maxims of Government, and that Equity, which being established by the Laws of Nature and Nations, is the Rule and Standard of all well govern'd Societies.

In those early Days the Taxes paid by Subjects, towards the Support of the Prince and Go-

Government, did not so much consist in a Tribute in Money, as in manufactur'd Goods, or the Produce of the Country, and in bodily Labour and Services, as the same were wanting and required.

At first, *Pharaoh* and his *Egyptians* (*m.* for by this Time they concurr'd with their Prince in his Severities) began with imposing a greater Tale of Brick on the *Israelites*, than was (*n.*) equal, and correspondent to the Number and Abilities of the People, in Comparison with the other Parts of the Nation: And had their Taxes been laid on and paid in Money, they might as justly have demanded a greater Sum than was equal to the Produce of their inland and foreign Trade. They afterwards exacted the same Tale of Bricks, and would allow no Straw, where withal to make them, and they might as well have demanded a certain Sum of Money, and at the same Time secluded them from enjoying such Privileges of Trade as were allowed to other Parts of the Nation, and were indeed necessary towards enabling them to make the Payments required of them.

Other concomitant Acts of Oppression attended these illegal, unequal Impositions upon

upon the House of *Jacob*; for as the Task-masters, (o.) these were Masters or Collectors of Tribute, were *Egyptians*, they abus'd and (p.) beat the *Israelitish* Officers, commanding them to make the People work harder, and more indeed than they were well able.

(q.) The People of *Israel*, for some Time imputed the Miseries they lay under to the Conduct of *Moses* and *Aaron*, who by God's Appointment were then their Heads and Representatives; but their future Behaviour did manifestly demonstrate their Fidelity and Zeal for the Interest of their Brethren, and as they became the Champions of their Liberty, God himself chalk'd out the Methods they did follow, towards recovering the same: For as in vain were all the former Applications for Redress, God directed *Moses* and *Aaron* to dally no longer, but positively to require and insist with *Pharaoh*, that the *Israelites* have Liberty to go out of *Egypt*, which they punctually did perform, and on his refusing to comply, did boldly denounce and execute the Judgments of God upon him and his People; and at last accomplish'd the necessary and long'd for Deliverance of the People. The Particulars

culars of which memorable Transaction are very fully narrated in the holy Scriptures.

And here it is to be observ'd (being indeed agreeable to the Laws of Nature and Nations) that in the Sight of God, the *Israelites* were absolv'd from all Allegiance to the King of *Egypt*, in so far as he had grossly violated the Faith on which they enter'd into his Dominions and became his Subjects; and that it was lawful for them, to use even violent Methods, towards withdrawing themselves from the Society of a People, that oppress them so tyrannically, as being the only, and the very Way God himself prescrib'd for their Delivery; and towards effectuating of which, he was pleas'd to manifest his divine Power, in the Plagues and Judgements he pour'd down upon the King and People of *Egypt*, and the miraculous Deliverances and Favours he confer'd upon the People of *Israel*, until he brought them out of the Land of *Egypt*, and out of the House of Bondage.

F I N I S.

